[P.1079] Wukchumni

764 767 All Wukchumni informants stated that it was the women tonoč·m who finally arranged the corpse for disposal and that the disposal was invariably interment. Cremation they attributed to the Monachi and to "people up north."

764 M.S., the ancient Yaudanchi, said that flexed burial was always practised by Yokuts people, cremation only by the Mono. She knew of a Waksachi doctor, wai ''·s, who was cremated [766] by his two wives, Mawo ·kono, a Wukchumni, and Pawečiku ·do, an Entimbich. They lived in Drum Valley.

For burial the corpse was always flexed, knees to chin, hands to sides of face or temples. It was tied in this position, then wrapped -- in deerskins if the family had wealth, in tule mats for most people -- and tied again. After European blankets were introduced, blankets of the deceased were used as wrappings.

[767] Meanwhile other tonoč·m were digging a grave by means of digging sticks and shallow baskets (usually old seed-beaters). A grave was about 4 or 5 feet long and seldom shallower than 3 feet. Cemeteries were located one to two miles away from a village.

[482 826] The corpse was carried to its grave by one of the strong female tonoč·m by means of tumpline and carrying nets. Such women had extra large and strong nets for this special purpose. As they walked to the cemetery they constantly called to the previously deceased to watch for this relative of theirs who was now coming. The corpse was carried three times around the grave and then deposited on its back. As she did this the carrier or leader of the tonoč·m said, "I have carried you, čoinemniu [Choinimni person, or whatever]. I have taken you to the graveyard. You are going to get buried. These people [accompanying relatives] are going home." Then the relatives added, "We are going to make a mourning ceremony for you. Don't come back. You must not see your people any more. You have to go north now. T·pni is there. You have to stay there" (J.B.).

Then all present, tonoč·m and relatives, threw in earth and they all ran home lest the spirit follow them; no one might look back (M.P.). The earth was filled in and tramped down by the women who dug it (S.G.). No food, gifts, or any objects were left at the grave. According to M.P., on their return home the 767 mourners washed the tonoč·m and paid them for their services. They were under no restrictions of foods or activities beyond this time of cleansing.

[838] Whether all the tonoč·m were transvestites is a moot point.[247] Perversion (in these persons) was denied by M. and J.P., J.B., and S.G. M.P. pointed out that her husband's maternal grandmother was a funeral singer and

[247] The native word, tonoč·m, has been used throughout this discussion in its meaning as "burier" or "corpse-handler," not "transvestite."

[P. 168 9] Kechayi

586 Divorce was usually caused by sterility, though the usual practice was for the man to have a child by another woman; "he didn't bother to leave his wife unless he disliked her." When a man left his wife, he took only his personal belongings and not more than one horse, if he possessed any. When a couple separated, the parents-in-law usually remained good friends and did not return any gifts which had been exchanged at betrothal.

Death

763 When a death was imminent, a winatum was
[624] sent to notify relatives on both sides of the person's family. Kin beyond the degree of first cousin were not usually notified, E.M. thinks, but this depended on how friendly a
764 relative had been with the deceased. A daughter washed and dressed the corpse; if there were no capable daughter, the mother would. This was regardless of the sex of the deceased. The corpse was laid on a pallet or deerskins on the floor, and the mourners all marched around it as doleful songs were sung by the professional corpse-handlers (čowe''ič). This performance was kept up as continuously as possible for two days.

764 The corpse-handlers had prepared the cre-
767 mation fire and carried the corpse to it. Everyone came, the mourners sitting near by wailing, the onlookers joining in. After two days the corpse-handlers gathered up the bones in a
[285] basket and buried them. The basket was a special, well-made, "pretty" one of conical shape called ponik. Who made or supplied this E.M. did not know. The corpse-handlers were paid for their services.

765 The period of mourning was indefinite. A widow cut off her hair, stayed quietly near her home until the large mourning ceremony was made, a period of one or two years.

767 The corpse-handlers were not transvestites, so far as E.M. knows. She stated that her paternal grandmother's sister, Woji'lit, was a normal woman, but followed this profession. She thinks that these people "grew up that way," i.e., with a desire "to get rid of the dead." They had no special totemic or dream helper, and "worked" for either moiety.

775 After death the spirit of the deceased went north until it came to a river. If it crossed this successfully, it went up; if it failed, it went down.

766 An unusual burial.--To illustrate an exceptional burial E.M. told the following anecdote which was related to her by Šaha'ma, an old Posgisa man.

This old man had gone out to help the women with seed-gathering. They went toward Table Mountain. Two strange boys were around hunting and, high on the cliffs of the mountain,

766 they saw a falcon's nest One of the boys was determined to go up and take the young; the other tried to dissuade him. The older boy started up anyway; the younger climbed more slowly, as he was afraid. Just then the parent birds returned and attacked the older boy. He was far up where there was no protection; the younger crouched behind some bushes. The birds beat at the boy until he lost his grip and fell down the face of the precipice. "He was a rag when he landed at the bottom." His companion crawled down and went after the seed-gatherers. They approached cautiously as they were all afraid of the angry birds. There was nothing could be done for the mangled lad, so the women put his remains in a carrying basket, dug a hole with their digging sticks, and buried the whole thing on the spot.

SUPERNATURAL POWER AND SHAMANISM

Acquisition of Power and Curing

756 The doctoring profession ran in families: E.M. claimed the profession was always inherited. But this does not refer to an inheritance of power, which was not transferable, but to the mere fact that a doctor's son usually became a doctor and that, in tangible terms, he acquired the accumulated wealth in his father's cache (pa čki). A son did not invariably become a shaman because his father was one; among several sons one might become a doctor. If no sons followed him, a shaman's cache was "lost forever" as no one else could touch it (see below).

776 616 756 [823] The supernatural creatures helped only members of the moiety with which they were associated. For the Nutuwich moiety Horned Owl and Bear were the "strongest" helpers; for Tokelyuwich, Eagle was the "strongest." "Sometimes Eagle would try to get a Nutuwich man and he would die quick." [Apparently he would die whether he "accepted" or not.] Water was a very powerful helper, and a large stream, like the San Joaquin River, particularly so.

756 [562] Women usually were not doctors. E.M. remembers only one, Wojilit, who sang at funerals and with doctors in the sweat house dance.

756 764 At his death a shaman's outfit was burned, or buried with him. If anyone else, even a shaman's son, tried to use it, he would die. Nothing was left to the son save the objects in the pački which were pure wealth, not supernatural talismans. It is not clear whether these objects were those the father had secured through his practice or whether they were gifts bestowed by his animal helpers; probably the former.

756 551 422 Doctor's cache.--It was thought that a doctor's cache (pački) was always located in a hill with a rock as a door. There was no mark of ownership. After the shaman's son had received his power, he could enter the pački at will. He accomplished this by dancing outside

Death

763 When a person was about to die and nothing further could be done to save him, his attend-
764 ants raised him up a little bit, said J.R. Then when he expired they said, "Now, that's the last breath. Lay him down." Many people were around watching. Immediately these spectators
[152] burst into tears and their crying was continued for two days. "A big bunch of people comes, looks at the corpse's face, then cries three or four minutes. Then a relative tells them to go sit down -- take a rest. No one sings at this time."

764 According to N.W., at a death the whole tribe assembled. The corpse was not dressed, but wrapped in a rabbitskin blanket and adorned with a bead belt and necklaces. All the people who came sang, wailed, and danced continuously for three days and nights.[124] Alternate periods of rest and activity lasted about thirty
[152] minutes. There were four official singers who
[481] sang the same songs over and over. The dancers moved, sexes mixed but not holding hands, in a single file with high stamping step around the corpse, crying as they moved.

In earlier times cremation was done; by
[177] the time N.W. was a little girl burial was the
178] established practice [probably about 1860, after white influx. -- A.H.G.] Only those dying of snake-bite or by violence were cre-
[766] mated, according to Powers.[125] The old crema-tion place was g'o 'wo'neu (on Coarse Gold Creek near the present power house). It was said the ashes were not buried, "just left there for the wind to blow away."

Since burial became the practice, the graves have always been made in the present cemetery. These were never far from the village to which the dead had belonged. The grave was about two feet deep; with digging sticks it took at least one day to excavate. The cavity was not lined.

After the body was put in the grave, its
[431] clothes and possessions were added. Gifts from relatives and friends, usually baskets, were added, the baskets being placed one over the head, another over the feet, and little ones along the body. These were always deliberately despoiled by cutting. Then loose beads were scattered over all. There was no special song for burial; the same as that of mourning was sung while the mourners cried and "danced" around the grave. The grave was then filled with earth.

Cremation was the normal disposal of the dead in old times, according to J.R. Nevertheless he continued his discussion with references to interment, perhaps unconscious that he

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[124] The corpse was kept but one night, then carried to its pyre on a litter handled by 4 men, according to Kroeber (Handbook, 499).

[125] p. 383.

683 when the time for public avengement came, no shaman was immune.

683 Once there was a shaman of ill-repute who
821 came to a celebration at Picayune He was mean,
766 would kill a person without provocation. Other doctors thought of the evil things that man had done, so they decided to kill him. He got a pain in his side, went home, and died. The people were afraid to bury him. They dug an extra deep grave at his own house, not in the regular burying-place. Such powerful whirlwinds arose they could scarcely handle him. It rained, thundered, and blew. When they got the body in the grave, they put large stones on top, but the whirlwind blew those rocks away "just like blasting." Finally they got the hole filled, put more rocks on top, and went home.

754 The activities of malicious shamans were
626 curbed by fear of revenge. A family, believing themselves to be the victim of deliberate ill-
683 treatment from a certain shaman, could legitimately seek to kill the man. This might be done by a member of the family or, in some cases, a man was hired to do it. Public opinion upheld the family when their suffering was known to be aggravated by a shaman's malice.

628 If a chief had a big family and they all started dying, he would think maybe it was a certain doctor who was killing them, said J.R. He didn't tell anyone. He secretly called a brave man, maybe two, not many. He told them that he had lost all his family and that he suspected a certain bad doctor of killing them. The doctor might live in some other community. The chief would have with him some money, perhaps valuable baskets, something worth fifteen to twenty-five dollars. He would say, "I am going to tell you, I want you. Now I tell you boys, I want you to go over to his place tonight. I will send a man over there to get the doctor and bring him where you are."

In the late afternoon, around five o'clock, the chief would send a man over to the shaman's house who, on some pretext, would get the shaman to come out to a prearranged spot. Without losing sight of him, the messenger went off a bit to find the killers who were to meet him. He said to them, "He is right there now. Are you ready? All right. Here he is." Then the hired men approached the shaman. These avengers had their bows, already charged with arrows, in their hands. When they were very close to their victim -- about four feet -- they shot directly at his heart. "That Indian doctor was done for." Then the men departed, leaving the corpse. The dead man's relatives came and took him away for burial. [Revenge by the shaman's family was not alluded to by any informant. Probably here, as elsewhere, the man's guilt was known to his relatives, so they would not attempt retaliation. -- A.H.G.]

756 Women shamans were known to the Chukchansi, and were evidently more common than among other

1: Gayton E-5 (1925-1930) 1948 NS29 Yokuts NS29
[P. 232 a] Western Mono NS25

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Redemption of Totem Animals, Aerie Ownership

Ritualistic payment was tendered for the killing of eagles, falcons, bears, and occasionally coyotes.

Eagle.---Eagles were not often killed although, according to both B.O. and S.O., it was not thought dangerous to do so, nor was it necessary to have permission from the chief if the eagle were a stray one. An eagle known to belong to a chief's aerie would not be killed. However, said S.O., "When a man killed an eagle, he took it to a chief -- Eagle is chief." The chief then sent out word, and everyone, regardless of his poša, came to make a payment to the hunter. The chief contributed a larger sum than the rest, but it was he who came into possession of the bird and kept or sold its valuable parts. The head, skin, and leg bones had ceremonial uses as talismans of supernatural power: the head as it was, the skin for its down, and the bones for whistles [sic]. Wing feathers were used on arrows. (The same parts of falcons were similarly used.) When the chief resold these items, he made a slight profit. Both S.O. and B.O. agreed that neither Michahai nor Waksachi honored the carcass with a special burial in earth or water.

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Live eagles and falcons were the subject of redemption more often than were dead specimens. B.O. said people would get young eagles to rear in order to sell them eventually to chiefs. "When a chief heard of a person having one somewhere he would send his winatum to have it brought over." As soon as the day of its arrival was known, the chief ordered all the people with Eagle ibuk (poša, totem) to assemble. They came dressed in their best, stood in a long line, and danced while the eagle was held by its owner. A blanket was then put on the ground and the bird set upon it. The chief who was redeeming the bird had a large basket of beads and perhaps a rabbitskin blanket or other valuables. The other people filed past the bird, each one throwing down a handful of beads on the blanket. Finally the chief put down his basket of beads and gifts and took up the bird saying, "That is my ibuk." The former owner then took up his pay. There was no weeping.

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The eagle was then kept "by the chief and his family as long as it wanted to stay." It was fed fresh raw meat daily. B.O.'s father had one: it would go off each year and come back for a while; finally it never returned.

For the same procedure with living birds, S.O. stated that "when the birds were grown they were given [sic] to some neighboring chief, like Wukchumni or anywhere." When the owner was ready to dispose of his bird, he sent his winatum to notify the chief whom he had determined upon as the recipient. If the offer was

7:Powers J-5 (1871-1876) 1877 NS29 Yokuts NS29

one who passes the mound casts upon it a stone, or a string of shell-money, or some other offering, which pious service will secure him from the dire calamity of dying away from home and friends.

Incremation is pretty general, though the Chukchansi are said to burn only those who die a violent death or are snake-bitten, and bury all others. A widow or widower is expected to mourn one year, and if they remarry within that time they are discountenanced. This is not saying that they do not sometimes nowadays, since they have become debauched by "civilization", remarry in a week, even, occasionally; but there is good reason to believe that in their better days of savagery they observed this period with much scrupulosity. But as soon as the first dance for the dead occurs it releases all the mourners in the tribe from further seclusion, even if it should happen only a few days after some death, and then they are free to enjoy all the gayeties as before.

As there has been some sharp discussion of the existence of an aboriginal belief in annihilation of the soul after death, it is worth while to adduce the testimony of one who should know. J. H. Bethel, who lived among the Chukchansi twenty-one years, and spoke their language fluently, affirms that this belief is very generally diffused, both among the Yokuts and the Mono.

ORIGIN OF THE MOUNTAINS.

Once there was a time when there was nothing in the world but water. About the place where Tulare Lake is now, there was a pole standing far up out of the water, and on this pole perched a hawk and a crow. First one of them would sit on the pole awhile, then the other would knock him off and sit on it himself. Thus they sat on top of the pole above the waters for many ages. At length they wearied of the lonesomeness, and they created the birds which prey on fish such as the kingfisher, eagle, pelican, and others. Among them was a very small duck, which dived down to the bottom of the water, picked its beak full of mud, came up, died, and lay floating on the water. The hawk and the crow then fell to work and gathered from the duck's beak the earth which it had brought up, and commenced making the mountains. They began at the place now known as Ta-hi'-cha-pa Pass, and the hawk made the east range,